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For the *JCMS Annual Review*

Chronology: The European Union in 2016

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Chronology: The European Union in 2016

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At a Glance

Presidencies of the EU Council: The Netherlands (1 January-30 June) and Slovakia (1 July – 31 December)

January

- 4 Sweden introduces ID checks on its border with Denmark in response to high numbers of asylum-seekers. Denmark announces ID checks on its border with Germany.
- 5 The EU launches an investigation into UK state aid for the conversion of the Drax coal power station to biomass.
- 7 Polish President Andrzej Duda signs a bill that grants the government control over state media. Under the law, government ministers will have the right to appoint and dismiss the heads of state broadcasters.
- 11 A new leader of the separatist Catalan Parliament, Carles Puigdemont, is sworn in.
- 11 The EU rules that a tax break offered to multinational companies in Belgium is illegal according to EU state aid rules.
- 13 The Commission launches an investigation under its rule of law mechanism into new Polish laws on state media and the constitutional tribunal.
- 14 Māris Kučinskis is nominated to be Latvia's Prime Minister following the resignation of Laimdota Straujuma in December 2016.
- 15 Macedonian prime minister Nikola Gruevski announces his resignation in advance of early parliamentary elections. The resignation forms part of the Pržino Agreement with the EU to bring an end to a long political crisis caused by a wiretapping scandal.
- 16 The EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Federica Mogherini, announces the end of sanctions against Iran following the nuclear deal in 2015.
- 17 Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann announces temporary suspension of Schengen in Austria.
- 19 The EU agrees to invest €217 million to improve energy infrastructure between the member states.
- 20 Swedish police launch a corruption investigation into Swedish foreign minister Margot Wallström over whether the rental contract for her municipal workers' union-owned apartment in Stockholm, for which there are long waiting lists of up to 15 years, was a bribe.
- 20 Pavel Filip becomes Prime Minister of Moldova.
- 22 Businessman Tihomir Orešković becomes Croatian prime minister after a new centre-right government is sworn in.
- 24 Independent candidate Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa is elected president of Portugal, succeeding Anibal Cavaco Silva of the centre-right Social Democratic Party.
- 26 Denmark passes controversial law that limits the rights of asylum-seekers.

February

- 1 The World Health Organisation (WHO) announces a global health emergency regarding the mosquito-borne Zika virus.
- 2 The European Council publishes a proposal for a new settlement regarding the UK's relationship with the EU.
- 2 The Commission agrees a new data transfer arrangement with the US, the EU-US Privacy Shield, to replace the Safe Harbour agreement.

- 3 EU leaders approve a €3bn facility to support refugees in Turkey.
- 3 The Romanian Senate lifts the immunity of Gabriel Oprea, former minister of internal affairs and deputy prime minister, to allow a corruption investigation to be opened.
- 12 At a meeting of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) in Munich, a partial ceasefire in Syria is agreed to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid. It came into effect on 27th February.
- 15 Bosnia and Herzegovina formally applies to join the EU.
- 15 The EU signs a transparency agreement with Andorra to fight tax evasion.
- 15 Following a meeting in Prague, the leaders of the Visegrad Four publish a joint statement on migration calling for an 'alternative back-up plan' for the Western Balkans route.
- 18-19 The European Council summit takes place. EU member states agree on a renegotiation package for the UK, a 'New Settlement for the United Kingdom within the European Union'. This includes exemption from 'ever closer union', and an 'emergency brake' on in-work benefits for migrants.
- 20 David Cameron announces a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU to be held on 23rd June and confirms he will campaign for the UK to remain in the EU.
- 24 A mini-summit on migration with the interior and foreign ministers of nine Balkan countries is hosted in Austria, after Macedonia closed its border to Afghans leaving 8,000 refugees stranded in Greece.
- 25 The EU lifts most sanctions against Belarus.
- 25 The Court of Justice rules that EU nationals living in other member states can be refused certain social benefits during the first three months of residence.
- 26 In a general election in Ireland the governing parties – Fine Gael and the Labour Party – suffer losses. Fine Gael nevertheless remains the largest party with 25.5 per cent of the vote, followed closely by Fianna Fáil with 24.4 per cent. On 6 May, a Fine Gael minority government replaces the Fine Gael-Labour coalition and Enda Kenny is re-elected Taoiseach.
- 26 Violence in and outside the Kosovan Parliament takes place during the election of Hashim Thaçi as President.
- March
- 4 The Commission publishes a 'roadmap' for restoring the Schengen passport-free travel area, including measures to strengthen external border controls.
- 5 In a general election in Slovakia, the left-leaning governing SMER-SD party came first with 28 per cent of the vote, but lost its parliamentary majority. On 17 March, a coalition government is formed between SMER-SD, the Slovak National Party, Most-Híd and Siet'. Robert Fico remained as Prime Minister.
- 7 An EU-Turkey summit fails to reach an agreement on the migration crisis. On 8 March Serbia and Slovenia announce the closure of the Western Balkans route. Two days later Hungary announces a state of crisis, sending troops to its borders.
- 10 The Council extends EU sanctions over action against Ukraine's territorial integrity that includes asset freezes and travel bans until 15 September.
- 13 In regional elections in Germany, the governing CDU suffers defeats amid a surge in support for the Eurosceptic Alternative for Germany (AfD).
- 16 EU institutions agree on a multi-year fisheries plan for the Baltic Sea designed to ensure the sustainable management of fish stocks.
- 17-18 The European Council summit takes place. EU leaders primarily discuss the migration crisis and agree a common position for a deal with Turkey that would see migrants arriving in Greece returned to Turkey in exchange for refugees in Turkish camps. They also discuss jobs, growth and competitiveness, and climate and energy policy.

- 22 35 people are killed in suicide bombings at Brussels Zaventem airport and Maelbeek metro station, close to the EU institutions. ISIS claims responsibility.
- 24 Former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić is found guilty of 10 out of 11 charges relating to genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity during the Bosnian War by UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague. He is sentenced to 40 years in prison.
- 30 The EU-India summit takes place in Brussels. Leaders announce a determination to strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation and to boost trade and investment.
- 31 Cyprus exits the EU bailout programme.

April

- 3 The first asylum-seekers in Greece are returned to Turkey under the EU-Turkey deal
- 4 Millions of files from off-shore law firm Mossack Fonseca that reveal the off-shore tax affairs of international politicians and elites – the so-called Panama Papers – are released to journalists, in the biggest ever data leak.
- 5 The ECJ rules that member states cannot extradite suspects to countries where their fundamental rights may be violated, thus undermining a key principle of the European Arrest Warrant which stipulates that extradition between member states is automatic.
- 5 Icelandic Prime Minister Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson steps down after the Panama Papers revealed he and his wife owned shares in an offshore company that held assets in the country's collapsed banks.
- 6 In a referendum held in The Netherlands on the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, 61 per cent of voters rejected the treaty on a 32 per cent turnout.
- 10 Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk announces his resignation. Volodymyr Groysman is appointed prime minister on 14 April.
- 11-12 Italy rescues 4,000 people crossing the Mediterranean from North Africa in two days.
- 13 The Macedonian president halts a corruption inquiry into 56 people and grants them amnesty, prompting street protests and condemnation from the EU.
- 14 The European Parliament approves the Passenger Name Record (PNR) directive, which will oblige airlines to share with EU member states the names of passengers entering or leaving the EU.
- 24 In the first round of presidential elections in Austria, the far-right Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) candidate Norbert Hofer comes first with 36 per cent of the vote, ahead of Green Party-backed independent candidate Alexander van der Bellen with 20 per cent.
- 24 In a snap general election in Serbia, the governing Serbian Progressive Party comes first with 48.2 per cent of the vote. Aleksandar Vučić is returned as prime minister.
- 28 Sweden extends border controls with Denmark for an additional six months. The extension of internal border checks is approved by the Commission on 4 May.

May

- 5 In elections to the devolved Scottish Parliament, the Scottish National Party (SNP) comes first with 46.5 per cent ahead of Labour with 22.6 per cent. Nicola Sturgeon remains as First Minister.
- 5 Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu announces his resignation. Binali Yıldırım is elected prime minister on 24 May.
- 9 Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann resigns following the defeat of the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) in the presidential elections. Christian Kern takes over as Chancellor on 17 May.
- 9 Greece adopts a new package of austerity measures including pension cuts and tax rises ahead of talks to unlock the next instalment of bailout loans.

- 10 Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Labor and Social Policy, Ivailo Kalfin, resigns after his party, Alternative for Bulgarian Revival, withdraws its backing for the government.
- 11 The Italian parliament approves same-sex civil unions.
- 12 The European Parliament votes against granting China market economy status.
- 16 Azerbaijan and Armenia agree to a ceasefire in the Nagorno-Karabakh region.
- 18 Macedonia postpones elections scheduled for June after the EU expressed concerns about their validity, as no opposition parties had registered candidates.
- 19 NATO signs an association agreement with Montenegro, which will become the alliance's 29th member state.
- 22 In a parliamentary election in Cyprus, Democratic Rally (DISY) is the largest party with 30.7 per cent, followed by the Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL) with 25.7 per cent. The election recorded a historically low turnout (67 per cent).
- 22 In a run-off presidential election in Austria, independent candidate Alexander Van der Bellen beats far-right FPÖ candidate Norbert Hofer with 50.3 per cent of the vote. The election, however, is subsequently annulled and re-run on 4 December.
- 23-24 The first UN World Humanitarian Summit takes place in Istanbul.
- 25 The Eurogroup reaches agreement on debt relief for Greece in order to release €10.3bn in bailout funds.
- 26-27 The G7 summit takes place on Kashiko Island, Japan.

June

- 1 The EU issues a formal rule-of-law opinion to Poland on its reforms of the Constitutional Tribunal.
- 1 Denmark and Sweden extend border checks for a further six months.
- 2 The German Bundestag declares the 1915 Armenian massacre by the Ottomans genocide.
- 7 The ECJ rules that illegal immigrants cannot be imprisoned if they cross a border within the Schengen area.
- 14 The ECJ rules that the UK can limit access to child benefits for EU citizens not considered 'lawful' residents.
- 16 British Labour Party MP Jo Cox is murdered by a far-right terrorist who shouted 'Britain first'. Campaigning for the EU referendum is temporarily suspended.
- 17 The Council extends sanctions regarding the annexation of Crimea that apply to EU persons and companies.
- 17 The coalition government in Croatia collapses after Prime Minister Tihomir Orešković loses a vote of no confidence following a conflict of interest scandal.
- 19 In run-off mayoral elections in Italy, the Five Star Movement wins key positions in Rome and Turin, in a defeat for the governing Democratic Party (PD).
- 23 The UK votes to leave the EU in a referendum with 51.9 per cent in favour of leaving compared with 48.1 per cent who voted to remain. The pound crashes to a 31 year low against the dollar following confirmation of the result.
- 24 David Cameron announces his resignation as British Prime Minister to take effect after a Conservative Party leadership campaign.
- 24 EU leaders and the Dutch Presidency release a joint statement on the UK referendum outcome, promising to respect the decision and confirming that the renegotiation agreement agreed in February will no longer take effect.
- 25 The foreign ministers of the EU's six founding member states hold emergency talks in Berlin and call on the UK to trigger Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty – the EU's legal procedure for a country to leave the EU – as soon as possible.
- 25 British Commissioner, Jonathan Hill, resigns. Sir Julian King becomes Commissioner for the Security Union on 19 September.
- 26 In a repeat general election in Spain, the conservative Popular Party (PP) wins the

most seats with 33 per cent of the vote, followed by the socialist PSOE with 22.6 per cent and Podemos with 21.1 per cent. Efforts to form a government after the previous election in December 2015 had failed. Mariano Rajoy is re-elected Prime Minister on 29 October.

- 28-29 The European Council summit, the first following the UK's vote to leave the EU, takes place. EU leaders agree that the next UK Prime Minister will trigger Article 50. They also announce €62m to be spent on migration partnerships with African countries. Leaders also hold an informal meeting without the UK as the EU-27.
- 29 Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon travels to Brussels for talks with European Parliament President Martin Schulz on keeping Scotland part of the EU.
- 29 Russia extends its ban on EU food imports until the end of 2017.
- 30 The Turkish parliament approves a move to restructure the high courts, giving more power to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

July

- 1 The Council extends economic sanctions against Russia until 31 January 2017.
- 5 The Commission launches a public-private partnership on cybersecurity, dedicating €450m in investment under the Horizon 2020 programme.
- 7 The European Parliament adopts a Commission proposal to establish a European Border and Coast Guard Agency.
- 7 The Commission declares Spain and Portugal in violation of EU deficit rules, paving the way for sanctions.
- 12-13 The EU-China summit takes place in Beijing.
- 13 Theresa May becomes leader of the Conservative Party and British Prime Minister. On 15 July, she announces that she will not trigger Article 50 immediately.
- 13 The Commission proposes new asylum rules that would see asylum claims rejected if they move to another EU member state than the one in which they arrived.
- 14 A large lorry drives into a crowd of people celebrating Bastille Day in Nice, killing 86 people. ISIS claims responsibility.
- 15 A military coup is attempted in Turkey but is defeated by forces loyal to the state. Around 300 people die during the overnight violence. The government attributes responsibility for the coup to the Gülen movement. A state of emergency is declared on 20 July.
- 15-16 The 11th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) takes place in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
- 18 The Commission announces €500m in aid for EU dairy and livestock farmers in return for a reduction in production and prices.
- 20 The UK confirms it will not take on the EU rotating presidency in 2017. The EU confirms that Estonia's presidency will be brought forward six months to take its place.
- 27 Michel Barnier, the French former Commissioner for financial services, is chosen as Chief Negotiator for the Commission in negotiations with the UK on leaving the EU.
- 27 The EU gives Poland three months to reverse changes to its Constitutional Tribunal amid concerns about the rule of law.

August

- 22 German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President François Hollande and Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi meet on the Italian island of Ventotene – where Altiero Spinelli wrote his 1941 Ventotene Manifesto that called for a European federation – to discuss the future of the EU following the UK's decision to leave.
- 26 The highest court in France overturns the so-called “burkini” ban – forbidding full-body swimsuits to be worn on beaches – imposed by a number of French seaside towns.
- 26 Visegrad Four calls for a joint European army at talks with Germany in Warsaw.

- 28 Germany's Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel states that negotiations for a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the EU and US have failed. On 1 September French Prime Minister Manuel Valls calls for an end to TTIP negotiations.
- 28 In a joint statement, the foreign ministers of Germany, France and Poland promise to intensify cooperation through the Weimar Triangle forum and reassert their commitment to European integration.
- 30 6,500 people are rescued off the coast of Libya in one day.
- 30 The Commission announces that Apple must pay €13bn in unpaid taxes to Ireland. The Irish government describes it as an infringement of Irish sovereignty. On 8 September, the Irish Parliament votes to appeal against the decision.
- 30 EU regulators BEREC announce a set of rules for the enforcement of net neutrality in order to prevent telecom companies prioritising some internet traffic over others.
- 30 Having launched his own party, En Marche!, in April, the French Economy Minister, Emmanuel Macron, resigns in anticipation of running for the French presidency in 2017.
- 31 Bosnian leaders agree to the EU's conditions for accepting its membership application.

September

- 1 The Kosovan Parliament cancels a controversial vote to establish its definitive border with Montenegro after months of violence.
- 4-5 The G20 summit takes place in Hangzhou, China.
- 6 The ECJ rules that member states do not have to offer EU citizens the same protection from extradition outside the EU as their own citizens.
- 11 In a snap election in Croatia, the right-wing Croatian Democratic Union (HZD) wins the most seats (36.3 per cent of the vote), ahead of the SDP-led 'People's Coalition' of left-wing parties (33.8 per cent). Andrej Plenković becomes Prime Minister on 19 October.
- 12 EU member states agree to increase the 2017 budget for dealing with the migration crisis to €5.2bn and to increase spending on job creation and growth to €19bn, by cutting funding to poorer eastern member states.
- 14 The European Parliament approves the European Partnership Agreement (EPA), a trade agreement with six African countries: Namibia, Mozambique, Botswana, Swaziland, South Africa, and Lesotho.
- 14 Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker holds his State of the Union speech. He calls for greater European cooperation in defence. He also announces an additional €200 billion to support investment in energy and digital sectors.
- 15 The EU extends sanctions over actions against Ukraine's territorial integrity that include asset freezes and travel bans until 15 March 2017.
- 16 Leaders of the EU-27 – EU member states minus the UK – meet in Bratislava for a summit on the EU's future following the UK's departure. They present a 'roadmap' of priorities for the coming months that includes measures to improve border security and increased European defence cooperation. The Visegrad Four release an alternative Joint Statement calling for 'flexible solidarity' on migrant relocation quotas.
- 19 In a parliamentary election in Russia, the ruling United Russia party wins 54.2 per cent of the vote.
- 20 The EU formally accepts Bosnia and Herzegovina's application to join the EU.
- 20 The ECJ rules that EU citizens may bring damages against the troika – the ECB, the IMF and the European Commission – if they can demonstrate their fundamental rights have been violated by EU bailout programmes.
- 20 Thousands demonstrate in Brussels to demand an end to TTIP and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) negotiations. On 23 September, the Commission and EU member states agree that concluding TTIP negotiations before

- outgoing US President Barack Obama leaves office is unlikely.
- 21 The Commission proposes a new bill to abolish mobile roaming charges that does not include a time limit on roaming.
- 28 The Commission proposes a mandatory Transparency Register for EU institutions, meaning that meetings with EU decision-makers would have to be registered in advance.
- 30 EU environment ministers agree that the EU can ratify the Paris Agreement on climate change without the approval of national parliaments, in order to meet the 7 October target date for ratification.

October

- 2 In a referendum announced by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on the EU's proposal for migrant relocation quotas, almost 98 per cent of voters reject the scheme. Turnout was, however, too low for the referendum to be valid, with just 40.4 per cent casting a ballot.
- 2 UK Prime Minister Theresa May announces the government will trigger Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty by the end of March 2017.
- 3 Polish women organise a national strike. 100,000 women dressed in black protest on the streets against the government's plan to further limit the country's already strict abortion laws. On 6 October the bill is defeated in parliament.
- 4 Turkey suspends almost 13,000 police officers and cuts broadcasts of a pro-Kurdish TV channel as part of the state of emergency.
- 4 The European Parliament ratifies the Paris Agreement on climate change.
- 5 Former Portuguese Prime Minister António Guterres is chosen to be the next Secretary General of the United Nations.
- 6 The new European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCG) is launched.
- 7 The EU and US announce that TTIP negotiations will not be concluded before the end of 2016.
- 8 The largest broadsheet newspaper in Hungary, the centre-left Népszabadság, shuts down suddenly, with journalists citing government pressure and its owners blaming declining sales.
- 10 Kersti Kaljulaid becomes the first female President of Estonia.
- 10 The Eurogroup releases €1.1bn for Greece as part of its third bailout, withholding a further €1.7bn until the country provides further details of reforms.
- 14 The Wallonia Parliament in Belgium rejects CETA, the EU-Canada trade agreement.
- 16 In parliamentary elections in Montenegro, the ruling, pro-Western Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) wins the most votes (41.4 per cent), followed by the pro-Russian Democratic Front with 20.3 per cent. The election takes place amid a number of arrests of Serb citizens for planning an alleged attack on state institutions. Duško Marković is appointed Prime Minister on 28 November.
- 19 A summit on Ukraine takes place in Berlin between the leaders of Russia, Germany, France and Ukraine.
- 20-21 The European Council summit takes place. Leaders discuss the conflict in Syria, migration and trade. They agree to improve measures to limit illegal migration from African countries by offering financial support in exchange for increased border control.
- 23 In the second round of parliamentary elections in Lithuania, the governing Social Democrats come third with 14.4 per cent (17 seats), behind the Lithuanian Peasants and Greens Party with 22.6 per cent (56 seats) and the Homeland Union party with 22.7 per cent (31 seats). On 9 November a coalition government is agreed between the Peasants and Greens and the Social Democrats. Saulius Skvernelis becomes Prime Minister.

- 25 The Commission publishes a proposal to harmonise corporate tax rates as part of a relaunched Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB).
- 28 Bulgarian Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva resigns her post to take up a job at the World Bank.
- 30 The EU and Canada sign the CETA trade agreement following seven years of negotiations, after Belgian regional parliaments won concessions such as the right to petition the ECJ on the legality of investor-state tribunals.

November

- 3 The High Court in the UK rules that Parliament must approve the triggering of Article 50. The government announces it will appeal against the decision in the Supreme Court.
- 3 The Paris Agreement on climate change enters into force.
- 8 Donald Trump is elected President of the United States of America. The Republican Party retains control of the Senate and House of Representatives.
- 9 Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas loses a vote of no confidence. On 23 November a new coalition government is sworn in, comprising of the Centre party, the Social Democrats (SDE), and the conservative IRL. Jüri Ratas of the Centre Party becomes Prime Minister.
- 13 In the presidential election in Bulgaria, Socialist-backed candidate Rumen Radev wins with 59.4 per cent of the vote, ahead of Tsetska Tsacheva of the ruling GERB party with 35.6 per cent. Prime Minister Boyko Borisov of GERB announces the resignation of the government.
- 13 In the second round of presidential elections in Moldova, the pro-Russian Socialist candidate Igor Dodon wins with 52.1 per cent ahead of Maia Sandu of the Action and Solidarity Party with 47.9 per cent.
- 14 The EU extends its sanctions against Syria by banning additional government ministers from the EU and freezing their assets.
- 17 The Council approves visa-free travel for Ukrainians as part of the EU-Ukraine partnership agreement.
- 20-21 Talks on the reunification of Cyprus break down without agreement.
- 23 The European Parliament votes in favour of the National Emissions Ceiling Directive, which supports national caps on air pollutants designed to halve the health effects of air pollution by 50 per cent by 2030.
- 23 Following former Commission President José Manuel Barroso's controversial decision to work for US investment bank Goldman Sachs, the Commission proposes tightening the Code of Conduct for Commissioners in order to lengthen the period of time they must wait before taking up new jobs without Commission approval.
- 24 The 18th EU-Ukraine summit takes place in Brussels.
- 24 European Parliament President Martin Schulz announces he will not seek a second term but will instead seek a seat in the German Bundestag in 2017.
- 24 The European Parliament votes in favour of freezing EU membership negotiations with Turkey in a non-binding vote, citing "disproportionate repressive measures" implemented following the attempted coup in July.
- 27 François Fillon wins the nomination as the candidate for the right-wing Les Républicains in the 2017 French presidential election in a primary.
- 27 A new coalition in Denmark between the conservative-liberal party Venstre, the libertarian Liberal Alliance, and the Conservative People's Party is agreed following 17 months of a minority government. Lars Løkke Rasmussen of Venstre remains Prime Minister.
- 29 Talks in Minsk between the foreign ministers of Germany, France, Ukraine and Russia on the Ukrainian conflict end without agreement.

December

- 1 French President François Hollande announces that he will not seek a second term in the 2017 presidential election.
- 4 In a referendum on constitutional reform in Italy, 59.1 per cent of voters reject the proposals, which would have significantly reduced the power of the Senate in Italy's bicameral system. Prime Minister Matteo Renzi resigns and Paolo Gentiloni of the Democratic Party takes over on 12 December.
- 4 In the re-run of the presidential election originally held in May, Alexander van der Bellen is elected President of Austria with 53.3 per cent of the vote ahead of far-right FPÖ candidate Norbert Hofer.
- 6 Michel Barnier, the Commission's chief Brexit negotiator, sets October 2018 as a deadline for concluding a withdrawal agreement with the UK in order to allow time for the deal to be ratified.
- 6 The EU and NATO agree to a seven-point plan for strengthening the transatlantic relationship, such as dealing with hybrid threats.
- 11 In parliamentary elections in Macedonia, the governing nationalist VMRO-DPMNE led by Nikola Gruevski won the most seats and 38 per cent of the vote, ahead of the Social Democrats (SDSM) who won 36.7 per cent. Emil Dimitriev takes over as an interim prime minister on 18 January 2017.
- 11 In parliamentary elections in Romania that follow a year of technocratic government, the Social Democrats (PSD) come first with 46 per cent of the vote, ahead of the centre-right National Liberal Party (PNL) with 20 per cent. On 30 December Sorin Grindeanu is designated prime minister after President Klaus Iohannis rejected the PSD's nomination of Sevil Shhaideh, who would have been the country's first Muslim and female leader.
- 11 The EU signs an agreement with Mali to return rejected asylum-seekers from Europe in return for help with youth unemployment and the security forces.
- 12 The EU and Cuba sign a dialogue and cooperation agreement to normalise relations.
- 15 The European Council summit takes place. Leaders discuss migration, internal security and counter-terrorism, and defence cooperation, amongst other things. They agree to extend sanctions against Russia for a further six months.
- 15 The EU offers Denmark an arrangement for continued access to Europol after a referendum in 2015 saw voters reject opting in to EU justice and home affairs cooperation.
- 16 The Swiss parliament approves an immigration law that gives priority to local people for jobs, but does not enforce limits on EU migration.
- 19 12 people die when a truck ploughs into a Christmas market at the Breidscheidplatz Christmas market in Berlin. ISIS takes responsibility for the attack.